ZERO'S FAMILIAR Chevalier

2

story:
NOBORU YAMAGUCHI

art:
YUKARI HIGA

Le Familier de
ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier
2
Art: Yukari Higa
Story: Noboru Yamaguchi
Character Design: Eiji Usatsuka

Story

The Story Thus Far

SAITO HIRAGA WAS AN ORDINARY TEENAGER, UNTIL THE DAY HE WAS SUMMONED TO THE MAGICAL WORLD OF HALKEGINIA. A CUTE BUT INEPT MAGE NAMED LOUISE SCREWED UP HER SUMMONING SPELL AND MADE HIM HER FAMILIAR, A MAGICAL SERVANT MEANT TO PROTECT HER AND DO HER BIDDING.

LOUISE'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND, PRINCESS HENRIETTA OF TRISTAIN, WAS MANIPULATED INTO A POLITICAL MARRIAGE THAT WAS USED AS COVER TO ATTACK HER COUNTRY. A SHADOWY FORCE KNOWN AS THE RECONQUISTA INFILTRATED ALBION'S GOVERNMENT TO SPARK A WAR BETWEEN ALBION AND TRISTAIN. ALBION'S GREATER MILITARY FORCE AND MASSIVE FLEET OF FLYING SHIPS WOULD HAVE CRUSHED TRISTAIN'S FORCES IF NOT FOR A LAST MINUTE WILD CARD--SAITO, WHO MANAGED TO FIX AND PILOT A ZERO FIGHTER PLANE THAT HAD FOUND ITS WAY TO THIS WORLD, AND LOUISE, WHOSE LEGENDARY VOID MAGIC AWAKENED JUST IN TIME, MANAGED TO REPEL THE ALBION FORCES.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE UPCOMING WAR, LOUISE AND SAITO ARE GIVEN A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT BY THE QUEEN AND TOLD TO DEPART TO THE FRONT. FIRST, THEY NEEDED THE APPROVAL OF LOUISE'S FAMILY–BUT INSTEAD OF RECEIVING THEIR BLESSING, LOUISE WAS NEARLY LOCKED UP BY HER OWN FATHER AND HAD TO ESCAPE WITH THE HELP OF HER BELOVED SISTER CATTLEYA.

Halkeginia Map

Characters

Tabitha

A TOP STUDENT AT TRISTAIN'S MAGIC ACADEMY. DESPITE BEING A GIRL OF FEW WORDS AND FEWER EXPRESSIONS, SHE IS VERY CLOSE WITH LOUISE AND CO. ALSO KNOWN AS "TABITHA THE SNOWSTORM."

Kirche

LOUISE AND TABITHA'S FRIEND AND ANOTHER STUDENT AT THE MAGIC ACADEMY. SHE HAS A BRIGHT, WILD PERSONALITY AND SPECIALIZES IN FIRE MAGIC. ALSO KNOWN AS "KIRCHE THE ARDENT."

Siesta

A COMMONER. SIESTA IS 17 YEARS OLD AND WORKS AS A MAID AT THE TRISTAIN MAGIC ACADEMY. SHE HAS FEELINGS FOR SAITO AND MAKES THEM KNOWN OFTEN. HAS AN IMPRESSIVE RACK.

Henrietta

PRINCESS, AND LATER QUEEN, OF THE KINGDOM OF TRISTAIN. SHE TOOK THE THRONE AT THE START OF THE WAR WITH ALBION. LOUISE'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND.

Cattleya

LOUISE'S SECOND-OLDEST SISTER. LOUISE ABSOLUTELY ADORES HER.

Louise

A SECOND-YEAR STUDENT AT TRISTAIN'S MAGIC ACADEMY. SAITO'S MASTER, SHE HAS PINK-BLOND HAIR AND REDDISH-BROWN EYES. SHE WIELDS THE LEGENDARY ELEMENT KNOWN AS "VOID." DAUGHTER OF A POWERFUL NOBLE FAMILY, SHE IS EXTREMELY PRIDEFUL AND STUBBORN. ALSO KNOWN AS "LOUISE THE ZERO."

Saito Hiraga

AN ORDINARY JAPANESE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT, SAITO WAS SUMMONED BY LOUISE AS HER FAMILIAR. HE LATER DISCOVERED THAT HE'S THE LEGENDARY FAMILIAR KNOWN AS "GANDALFR," WITH THE ABILITY TO WIELD ANY WEAPON. HE USUALLY FIGHTS WITH DERFLINGER, A MAGICAL BLADE THAT'S CAPABLE OF SPEECH.

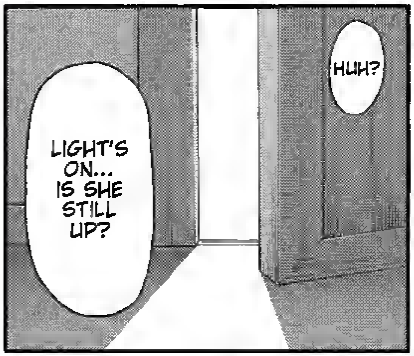
CLAP
ぱち
CLAP
ちん
ALL RIGHT! NOW THAT ALL OUR CUSTOMERS ARE GONE...
I'LL ANNOUNCE THE RESULTS OF THE TIP RACE~!

Chapter 7: The Enchanted Fairy Tavern – Part IV

YAAAY!
THOUGH I'M SURE COUNTING UP THE TIPS WILL BE UNNECESSARY!
HUH? WHY NOT?
JUST LOOK AT THIS TIP!
THAT GUY LEFT HIS WHOLE WALLET...
AND IT'S FILLED TO THE BRIM~!
TUG
THE WINNER IS... LITTLE LOUISE!

NOBLE OR COMMONER, IT DOESN'T MATTER...
THE ONLY PERSON WHO'S ALLOWED TO TOUCH LOUISE IS ME!!
.....
...
HERE YOU GO.
FLUTTER
PEEK

I GUESS MAYBE SHE'S WORN OUT FROM USING HER MAGIC FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE.
STUPID LOUISE. SHE WINS THE TIP RACE, BUT THEN SHE SAYS SHE'S GOING TO TAKE THE DAY OFF TO SLEEP.
CREAK
Yay!
Congratulations!

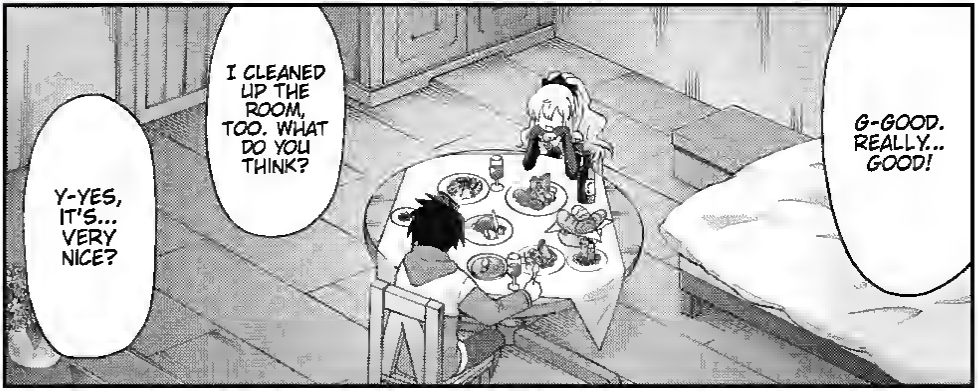

LIGHT'S ON... IS SHE STILL UP?
HUH?

CREAK...

BUT STILL! THIS IS THE ONLY DAY SHE CAN USE THE ENCHANTED FAIRY BUSTIER, I THOUGHT SHE'D TAKE ADVANTAGE.
I WONDER WHAT SHE'S THINKING.

I MADE IT.
WHAT THE ...?
WHAT'S ALL THIS?
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO WEAR THAT TO WIN OVER MORE OF THE CUSTOMERS.
ARE YOU GOING TO STAND THERE LOOKING LIKE AN *IDIOT* ALL NIGHT?
HURRY UP, IT'S TIME FOR SUPPER.
.....
YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T LET ANY OF THEM TOUCH ME, RIGHT?
SO LET'S **EAT** ALREADY. JESSICA SPENT A LONG TIME TEACHING ME TO MAKE ALL THIS. I DON'T WANT IT TO GO TO WASTE!

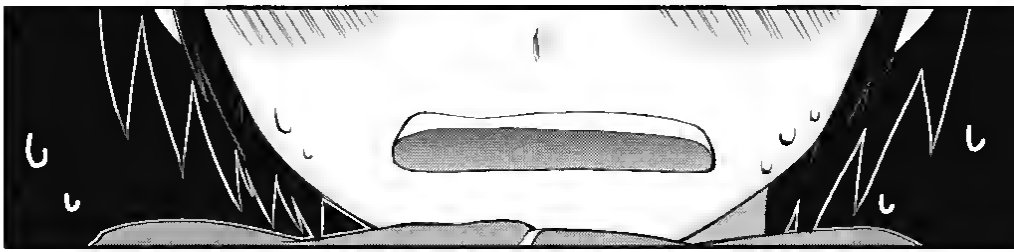
HOW DOES IT TASTE?
.....
CHOMP


I CLEANED UP THE ROOM, TOO. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
G-GOOD. REALLY... GOOD!
Y-YES, IT'S... VERY NICE?

BA-DMP
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF...
BA-DMP
ME?
BA-DMP

LEAN
AND...

STUNNED
STUNNED
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
GUH ...!



D-DON'T COMPLIMENT ME LIKE *THAT!*
T-TRÈS BIEN.
.....

T-TRÈS BIEN.

ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier

Chapter 8: A Tristanian Holiday – Part I

TP
TP
hah
hah
.....
hah
hah
Haah
THE ENCHANTED FAIRY TAVERN

EXHAUSTED ホロ
QUESTION FOR YOU, BIG BROTHER.
WH-WHAT IS IT, UM...SIS?
POINT
WHEN I CALLED FOR YOU, JUST WHAT WERE YOU DOING?
Good luck, Saitou!
AND JESSICA'S BREASTS, WEREN'T YOU?
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
THAT GIRL'S BUST...
YOU WERE LOOKING AT THAT GIRL'S THIGHS...
THAT GIRL'S BUTT...

Right.
STAY. YOU STAY RIGHT THERE AND LISTEN UP, GOT IT?
DOGS ONLY LEARN THROUGH CLEAR REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.
UHH ...!
TILT
GRAB
HEY!
DASH
G-GET BACK HERE!
RACK

OH, RIGHT.
?
THEY'RE SAYING THAT THE QUEEN WENT MISSING WHILE SHE WAS PASSING THROUGH TOWN...
THERE'S A CHANCE SHE WAS KIDNAPPED.
HER MAJESTY...?!
TP TP TP
GAH!
THUD

MR. SAITO?
YOUR MAJES-TY?!

はいっ DIVE

SHH!
SO, THIS IS THE "ENCHANTED FAIRY TAVERN"?
YEAH.
YEAH, YOU FOUND IT--BUT SOMEBODY LIKE YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T GO INSIDE...

Um...
DOES THIS INN HAVE A PLACE WHERE SOMEONE COULD HIDE?
WE'RE LIVING IN THE ATTIC RIGHT NOW, SO I GUESS--

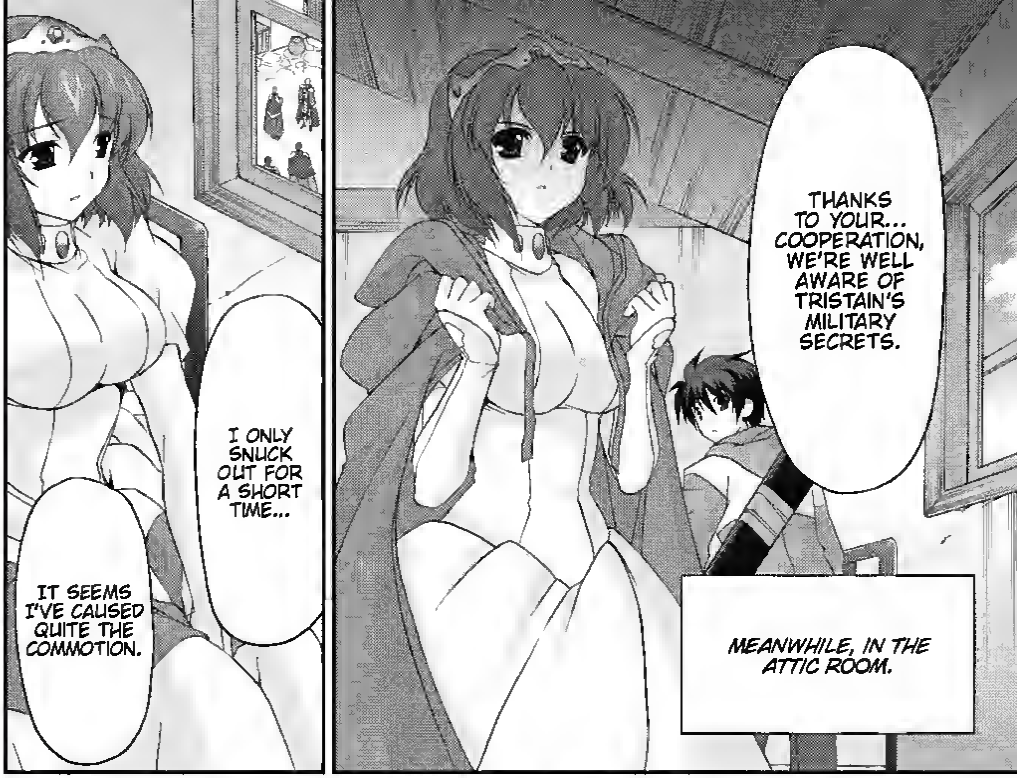
DUCK

YOU, SEARCH OVER THERE!
SHE MAY BE HEADED TOWARD THE BOURDONNE DISTRICT!
.....!

GUIDE ME THERE. PLEASE.
ERK--!
GRRRRR
FWA
すっ
THANK YOU, MR. SAITO.
SIGH... WELL, IF SHE HASN'T CHASED AFTER ME BY NOW, SHE'S PROBABLY WORKING. I GUESS IT'LL BE FINE.
I'LL BRING YOU THERE.
OKAY.

TRISTAIN'S FORCES HAVE LARGELY BEEN GATHERED FOR THE INEVITABLE WAR AGAINST ALBION.
MEANWHILE, AT THE TAGLIALIGE ROYAL THEATER.
MURMUR
MURMUR

I SEE...
CLINK
WE WON'T HAVE THE SHIPS TO DEFEND OURSELVES FOR AT LEAST HALF A YEAR.
WHAT ABOUT THE FLEET? HOW FAR ALONG IS THE CONSTRUC-TION?
YOU KNOW... IF WE'D MET IN A SECRET ROOM SOMEWHERE, WE'D BOTH BE IMMEDIATELY SUSPECTED OF SOME HEINOUS PLOT.
TRISTAIN'S SENIOR STATESMAN RICHEMONT
BE PRACTICAL, MY LORD. WE BOTH KNOW THIS COUNTRY WILL BE PART OF ALBION SOON ENOUGH.
HEH... HOW BOLD OF ALBION.
I'M SURE THAT IF YOU CAME OVER TO OUR SIDE, HIS MAJESTY WOULD GLADLY AWARD YOU A MEDAL FOR YOUR SERVICES.
INGENIOUS... BUT THAT IS TO BE EXPECTED FROM SOMEONE WITH YOUR REPUTATION. THE EMPEROR HAD A PARTICULAR INTEREST IN THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDED.


THANKS TO YOUR... COOPERATION, WE'RE WELL AWARE OF TRISTAIN'S MILITARY SECRETS.
I ONLY SNUCK OUT FOR A SHORT TIME...
IT SEEMS I'VE CAUSED QUITE THE COMMOTION.

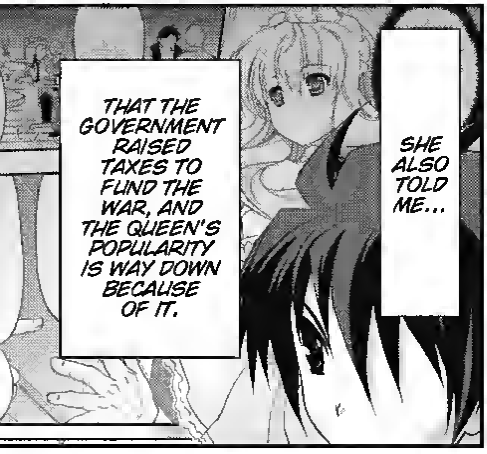
MEANWHILE, IN THE ATTIC ROOM.

YOUR MAJESTY... YOU'RE ACTING AS THE **QUEEN** NOW, RIGHT?
ISN'T SNEAKING OUT LIKE THIS KIND OF SELFISH?
I KNEW YOUR LOCATION FROM LOUISE'S REPORT.

QUEEN HENRIETTA.
TRISTAIN'S YOUNG QUEEN GREW UP WITH LOUISE, AND THEY'RE REALLY CLOSE FRIENDS.

SHE WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH PRINCE WALES, WHO WAS KILLED BY WARDES OF THE RECONQUISTA.
A VERSION OF WALES WAS BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE, BUT LOUISE AND I HAD TO SLAY HIM.

AFTER LOSING THE PRINCE TWICE, HER GENTLE PERSONALITY WARPED INTO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.
LOUISE TOLD ME THAT TRISTAIN IS GETTING READY FOR AN OFFENSIVE STRIKE AGAINST RECONQUISTA-CONTROLLED ALBION.


SHE ALSO TOLD ME...
THAT THE GOVERNMENT RAISED TAXES TO FUND THE WAR, AND THE QUEEN'S POPULARITY IS WAY DOWN BECAUSE OF IT.

ANYWAY, I'LL GO GET LOUISE--

I KNOW MY BEING HERE IS SELFISH...
I DON'T WANT HER TO BE DISAP-POINTED IN ME.
SO PLEASE DON'T TELL LOUISE THAT I'M HERE.
DASH
YOU MUSTN'T!
FREEZE
EVERY DAY WITHOUT FAIL, LOUISE SENDS ME A DETAILED REPORT OF HER OBSER-VATIONS.
HOW-EVER...
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO SEE HER TODAY.
TODAY AND TOMORROW, I MUST BE ABLE TO BLEND IN WITH THE COMMONERS.
NO ONE TIED TO THE PALACE CAN KNOW WHAT I'M DOING, NOT EVEN LOUISE.
SO, UNTIL TOMORROW, I NEED YOU TO BE MY BODYGUARD!
GRASP
HUH ...?

AND EVEN WORSE...
I KNOW THAT THERE ARE TRAITORS AMONG THEM.
I'M SURE YOU WOULDN'T KNOW THIS, BUT...
AT THE PALACE, I'M USUALLY VERY ISOLATED.
MANY OF THE OTHER NOBLES DON'T LIKE THAT I ASCENDED THE THRONE SO YOUNG.
SNEAKING OUT ON HER OWN LIKE THIS...
MAYBE SHE'S TRYING TO PROTECT LOUISE BY NOT BREAKING HER COVER.
OKAY, I'M IN.
SINCE YOU'RE THE ONE ASKING, YOUR MAJESTY.
REALLY?
GLOW
ぽ

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO, ANYWAY?
I DON'T NEED TO LEAVE THE CITY, BUT TO COMPLETE MY INVESTIGATIONS WITHOUT GETTING CAUGHT, I'LL NEED TO FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO HIDE.
IF I STAY HERE, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE LOUISE FINDS ME.
BUT, BEFORE I GO...
I NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS *EXTREMELY* CONSPICUOUS OUTFIT.

THERE'S THESE CLOTHES-- LOUISE BROUGHT THEM TO PASS AS A COMMONER.
WOULD IT BE ALL RIGHT IF I BORROWED THEM FOR A WHILE?

SHHHN
GAH!!

PLEASE PASS ME THE OUTFIT.

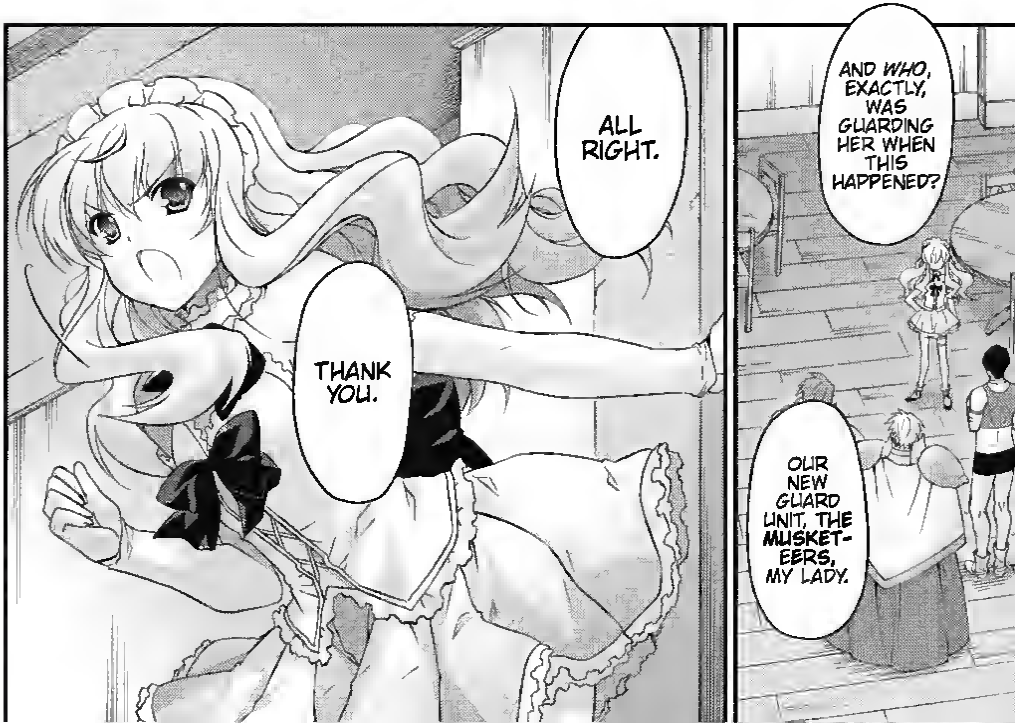
EH...?
H-HERE.

IT'S A LITTLE SMALL, ISN'T IT?
DRIP ポタ
DRIP ポタ
DRIP ポタ
IT WAS MEANT FOR LOUISE, SO NO SURPRISE THERE.
.....
HMM... WELL, I SUPPOSE IT WILL HAVE TO DO.

AND THIS WILL FINISH THE DISGUISE.
110ft...
FLIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
Uh she doesn't look like the Queen anymore, that's for sure
NOW THEN, SHALL WE?
TUG
IF I GO OUT DRESSED LIKE THIS AND ACT LIKE WE'RE LOVERS, SURELY NO ONE WILL RECOGNIZE ME.

MEANWHILE, DOWNSTAIRS AT THE ENCHANTED FAIRY TAVERN.
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
QUIET! THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SOME LOWLY BAR WENCH!
IT HAS EVERY-THING TO DO WITH ME!
DID HER MAJESTY ACTUALLY GO MISS-ING?!
I MAY NOT LOOK IT RIGHT NOW, BUT I'M REALLY ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S LADIES-IN-WAITING...
SO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED, IMMEDIATELY!
I...
I'M SORRY, MY LADY!
HERE'S WHAT WE KNOW...

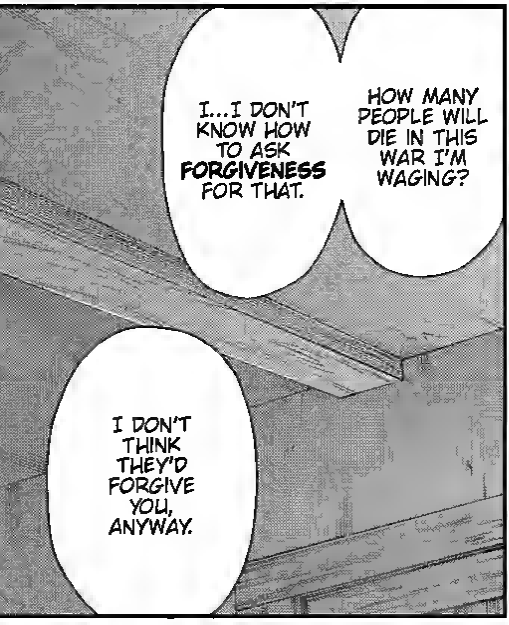
WE WERE HEADING BACK FROM INSPECTING THE MERCENARIES' CAMP WHEN SHE MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED FROM THE CARRIAGE SHE'D BEEN RIDING IN.
BA-DMP
WE DON'T HAVE ANY LEADS ON A CULPRIT YET...
BA-DMP
AND WE STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT *HOW* THEY GOT HER OUT OF THE CARRIAGE.
BA-DMP
DO YOU THINK...THE RECONQUISTA COULD'VE GOTTEN HER?
WOW, I DON'T THINK ANYONE NOTICED US.
Ha ha


ALL RIGHT.
THANK YOU.
AND *WHO*, EXACTLY, WAS GUARDING HER WHEN THIS HAPPENED?
OUR NEW GUARD UNIT, THE **MUSKET-EERS**, MY LADY.

.....
BAM
SAITO, YOU BASTARD.
OF COURSE YOU AREN'T HERE WHEN IT MATTERS.
MAYBE HE CAME BACK WHILE I WAS BUSY.
HE RAN OUTSIDE EARLIER, BUT MAYBE...
TAP
TAP
TAP
YOUR MAJESTY... PLEASE BE SAFE.
SSSHHH
DRIP
DRIP
FIRST, I NEED TO GO TO THE PALACE AND QUESTION THE MUSKETEERS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED.
GRAB
は!?

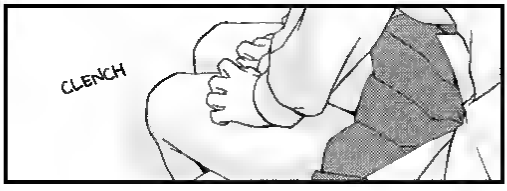
JEEZ... THIS IS EVEN SKETCHIER THAN THE ENCHANTED FAIRY TAVERN.
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY CHARGE MONEY FOR A ROOM LIKE THIS.
HEE HEE...
WE WERE LUCKY TO FIND A PLACE TO STAY SO QUICKLY.
I THINK IT'S PERFECT.
SSSHHH
YES...THE ONLY WAY TO END THIS WAR IS TO SEND OUR TROOPS TO INVADE ALBION. OTHERWISE, IT WILL DRAG ON AND ON.
SO, YOUR PLAN...
CLINK
IS IT SOMETHING FOR THE WAR?
YOU FOUGHT ON OUR BEHALF, BUT...
DO YOU HATE THIS WAR?

MUMBLE
IS THERE SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT...?
I'VE BEEN FIGHTING TO PROTECT SOMEONE, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN.


HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL DIE IN THIS WAR I'M WAGING?
I...I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ASK **FORGIVENESS** FOR THAT.
I DON'T THINK THEY'D FORGIVE YOU, ANYWAY.

I SEE...
THEN IT'S ALL MY FAULT THAT YOU HAVE TO FIGHT.

YES, YOU'RE RIGHT.


CLENCH

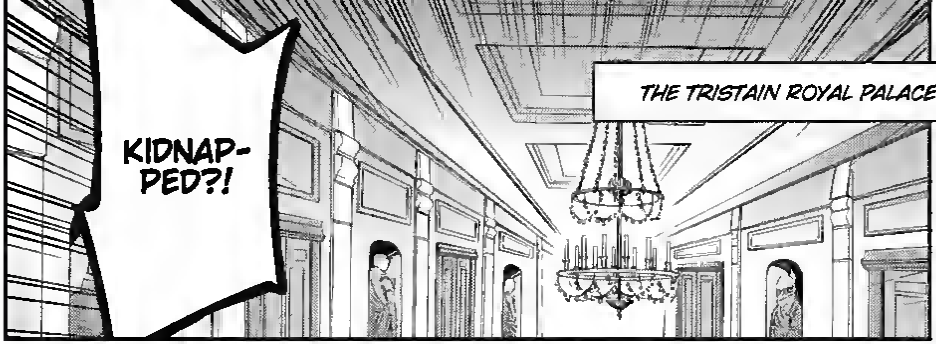
I CAN'T TRUST ANY OF THE MAGES...
I CAN'T FORGIVE THE PEOPLE WHO MADE ME INTO *THIS*...AND I CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF.
AND I CAN'T...

STOP
BANG
OPEN UP!
THIS IS THE ROYAL GUARD!!
BANG
BANG
WE'RE SEARCHING FOR AN ESCAPED CRIMINAL-- ALL INNS IN THE AREA ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION!
OPEN THIS DOOR NOW!
WE AREN'T FAR FROM THE PALACE... I'M SURE THEY'RE LOOKING FOR ME.
SHH... WE'LL LET THEM THINK IT'S EMPTY.

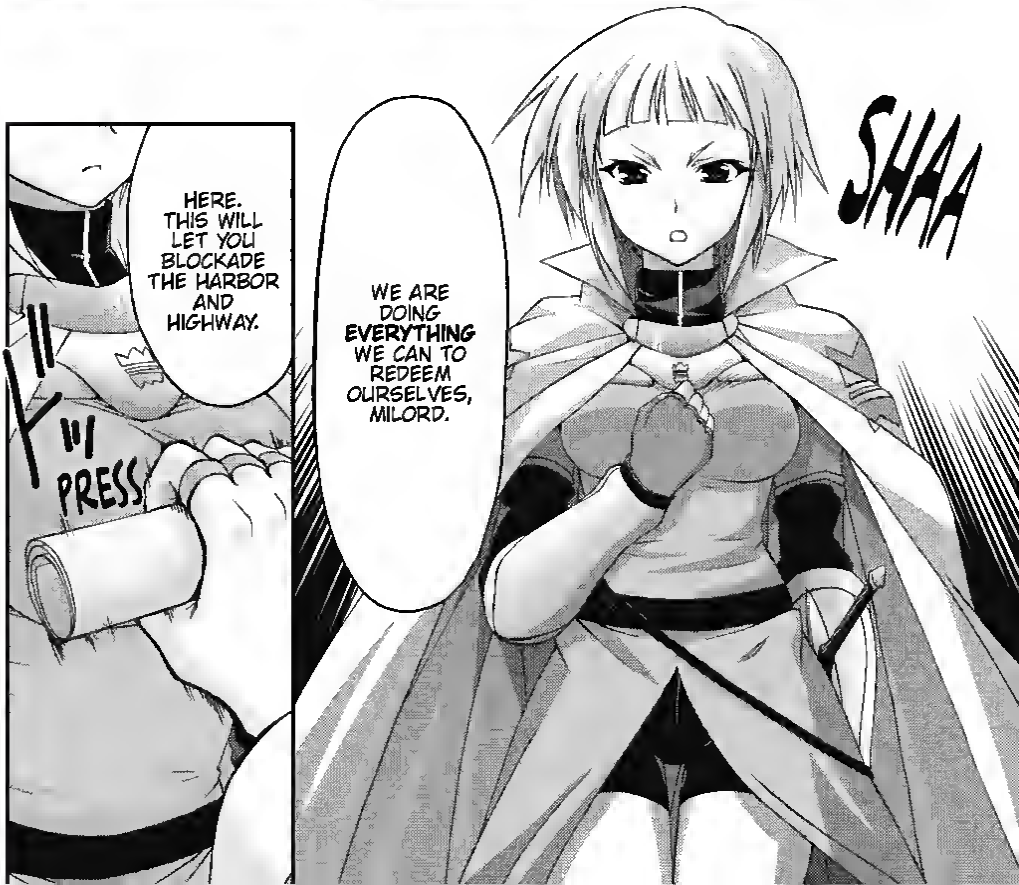
SINCE YOU'RE THE ONE ASKING, YOUR MAJESTY.

ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier

Chapter 9: A Tristanian Holiday – Part II


THE TRISTAIN ROYAL PALACE.
KIDNAP-PED?!

ARE THE MUSKETEERS AN ELITE SQUAD MEANT TO SHOWCASE OUR ARMY'S INCOMPE-TENCE?!
POINT

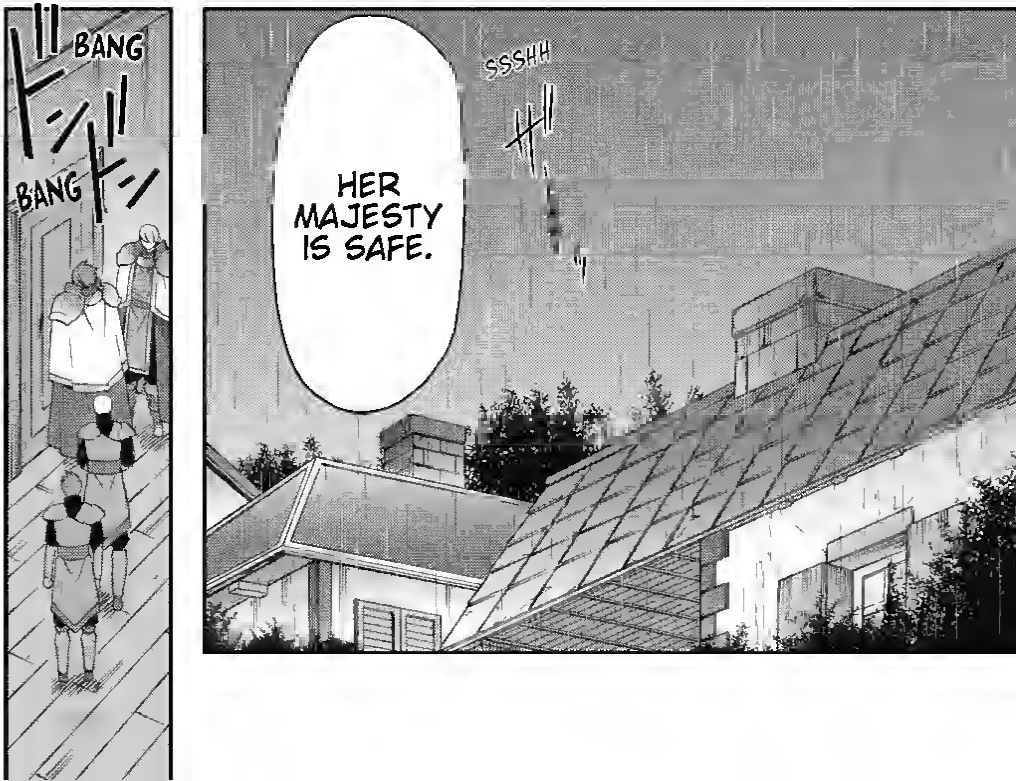

SHAA
WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO REDEEM OURSELVES, MILORD.
HERE. THIS WILL LET YOU BLOCKADE THE HARBOR AND HIGHWAY.
PRESS

SLAM
BLAST THAT WOMAN! SO MUCH FOR THE MIGHTY MUSKET-EERS...
SHE CAN CALL HERSELF CHEVALIER ALL SHE LIKES, BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN A SURNAME AND TITLE TO TURN A PEASANT INTO A NOBLE.
IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT HER MAJESTY IS FOUND QUICKLY!
IF YOU DON'T FIND HER, I'LL PUT YOUR ENTIRE SQUAD TO DEATH BY HANGING!
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY...
SMIRK
SLIDE
SCRITCH
SCRITCH
SCRITCH
SSSHHH

WAIT!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
A LADY-IN-WAITING...?
AIM
SSSHH
AT THIS DISTANCE, MY GUN IS MUCH MORE ACCURATE THAN MAGIC.
THOUGH I DON'T WIELD A WAND, I AM STILL A NOBLE... YOU MUST ANNOUNCE YOURSELF TO ME.
Hah
Hah
I AM ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S LADIES-IN-WAITING!
AND I NEED TO BORROW YOUR HORSE!
RIGHT NOW!
I AM A NOBLE-WOMAN WHO REPORTS DIRECTLY TO HER MAJESTY...
DE LA VALLIÈRE.
AND YOU?

THE MUSKET-EEERS?!
GRATT
I AM CAPTAIN OF HER MAJESTY'S MUSKET-EERS...
AGNÈS CHEVALIER DE MILAN.
DE LA VALLIÈRE ...?
HOW COULD YOU BE SO STUPID!
POINT
YOU LET HER MAJESTY BE KIDNAPPED OUT FROM UNDER YOUR NOSE!
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO HER-- ANYTHING AT ALL-- I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU!

SHE'S SO SERIOUS FOR SOMEONE SO YOUNG...
SHE MUST BE THE FRIEND THAT HER MAJESTY SPOKE OF.
.....
TURN
HER MAJESTY TOLD ME A LOT ABOUT YOU...
IT'S AN HONOR TO FINALLY MEET YOU IN PERSON.
H-HOLD ON, I WAS STILL YELLING ...!
ANYWAY, LET ME EXPLAIN THE SITUATION.
FRET FRET FRET


BANG
BANG
SSSHH
HER MAJESTY IS SAFE.

BANG
BANG
I THOUGHT THEY'D LEAVE IF WE PRETENDED WE WEREN'T HERE, BUT...
BANG
BANG
DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?!
OPEN THIS DOOR, NOW!
BANG
Y-YOUR MAJESTY --?
THIS ISN'T GOOD...
BANG
BANG
BANG
IF YOU DON'T OPEN UP, WE'LL BREAK DOWN THE DOOR!
HUH?
THUD
WAH!
MM?!

TROMP
トタトタ TROMP!!
ALL RIGHT, WHAT ARE YOU HIDING IN HERE--?
SLAM
Mmm
Nn
Ah
Mm!
Oh
AWKWARD...

Mm
UGH.

JEEZ... NEXT TIME, COULD YOU GIVE IT A REST BEFORE WE BREAK DOWN THE DOOR?
SSHHH
UH, SORRY TO BOTHER YOU?
LET'S... LET'S JUST GO.

SLAM
PHEW...
UM
YOUR MAJE-STY?
FLOP

.....
CREAK

RUSTLE
PLEASE CALL ME "ANN."
FOR NOW...

BUT, JUST FOR TONIGHT... COULD WE PRETEND?
CREAK

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO REALLY BECOME MY LOVER...
CREAK

IF THINGS KEEP GOING LIKE THIS, I'M GONNA BE IN BIG TROUBLE!
I have to tell her no
DURING THIS WAR...
IF I EVER DO SOMETHING SO WRONG THAT I CAN'T BE REDEEMED...
I WANT YOU TO TAKE YOUR SWORD AND CUT ME DOWN.
I THOUGHT ABOUT ASKING LOUISE, BUT...
I DON'T THINK SHE'D BE ABLE TO DO IT.
AND YOU THINK I CAN?! THERE'S NO WAY!
CREAK

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?! STOP ACTING SO WEAK!
YOU'RE THE QUEEN, AND LOUISE'S BEST FRIEND!
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE COULD PROTECT EVERYONE IF YOU TRY!

YOU KNOW...
I WON'T BE A STAND-IN FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.

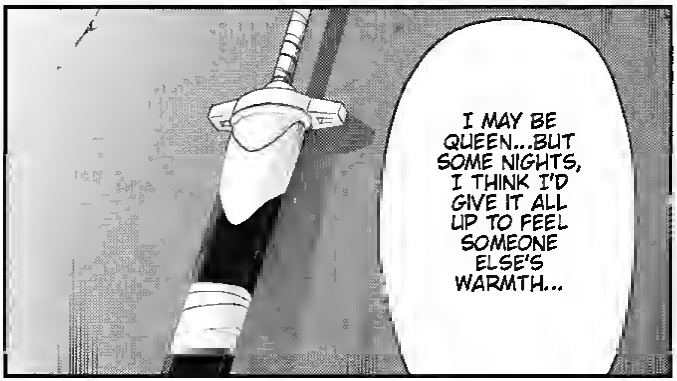
PRETEND TO BE YOUR LOVER? CUT YOU DOWN?
I CAN'T... I WON'T DO ANYTHING THAT MAKES LOUISE SAD!

BA-DUMP

UM...
Y-YOUR MAJESTY...
HUG
.....

AT LEAST... PLEASE DON'T HOLD THIS WEAKNESS AGAINST ME.

SSH


I MAY BE QUEEN...BUT SOME NIGHTS, I THINK I'D GIVE IT ALL UP TO FEEL SOMEONE ELSE'S WARMTH...

.....
WILL YOU FILL ME IN SOON, YOUR MAJESTY?
YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE SEARCHING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU, AND YOU'RE RISKING YOUR LIFE TO HIDE AWAY.
YOU DIDN'T JUST RUN AWAY ON A WHIM, DID YOU?
I GUESS YOU DESERVE TO KNOW THE WHOLE STORY.
I'M ON A FOX HUNT.
OR, SHOULD I SAY...I'VE BEEN AFTER A VERY CLEVER FOX FOR A WHILE NOW, AND I'VE LAID A TRAP TO CATCH HIM.
TAP
AND THE BAIT IN THIS TRAP... IS ME.
BY TOMORROW, HE'LL SURELY EMERGE FROM HIS BURROW.

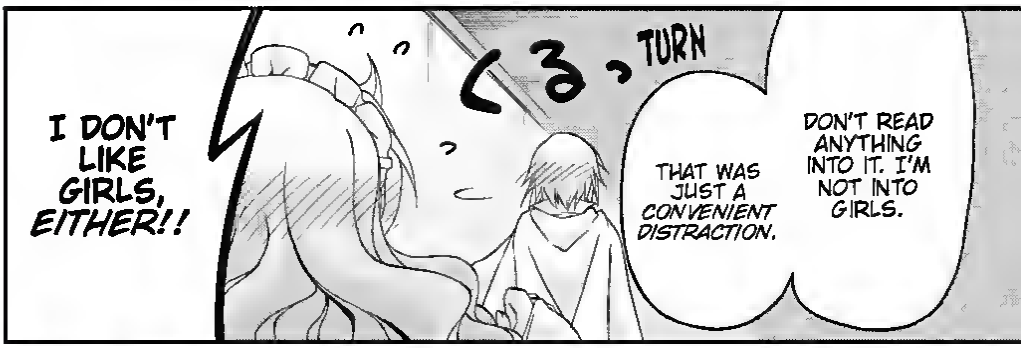
……
THIS FOX... WHO IS IT?
……
A TRAITOR WORKING FOR ALBION.
……
DASH
ダッ
THE KIND OF RAT THAT ISN'T CONTENT TO GET FAT OFF ITS OWN KINGDOM'S GRANARY, BUT TRIES TO BITE ITS MASTER'S THROAT.
YES.
WHAT? A RAT?
CATCHING A RAT.
ALL THIS SNEAKING AROUND, TAILING SOME UNIMPORTANT PAGE FROM THE PALACE... WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH?

DRAT, HE'S COMING THIS WAY.
IF THAT'S ALL YOU NEED, I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE, SIR.
WHO'S IN THAT ROOM ...?
THIS WAY.
GRAB
SQUISH
??
STARE
IF THE PAGE DOESN'T MAKE IT BACK TO THE PALACE SAFELY, THEY'LL SUSPECT SOMETHING'S WRONG.
UM...
PULL
WHA—?!

???!!!!!
GLANCE
!!
EEE
W-W-WH-WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?! WHY IS THIS RANDOM GIRL K-K-KISSING ME?!
MWA
DASH
OKAY, HE'S GONE.
Y-yeah

W-W-WH-WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!
.....

FWEEE


I DON'T LIKE GIRLS, EITHER!!
くるっ TURN
THAT WAS JUST A CONVENIENT DISTRACTION.
DON'T READ ANYTHING INTO IT. I'M NOT INTO GIRLS.

ALL RIGHT, I'LL DO IT.
FLICK

ISN'T THAT... OVERKILL?
YOU'RE A MAGE, RIGHT? CAN YOU BLOW THIS DOOR OPEN?
I DON'T WANT HIM TO RUN OFF WHEN HE HEARS ME FUSSING WITH THE LOCK.

HE'S JUST A MESSENGER, SENT TO DELIVER THAT LETTER.
SHOULDN'T WE FOLLOW THAT BOY?
WE NEED HIM TO RETURN TO THE PALACE SAFELY, AND REPORT TO HIS MASTER THAT EVERYTHING WENT FINE.
STAND

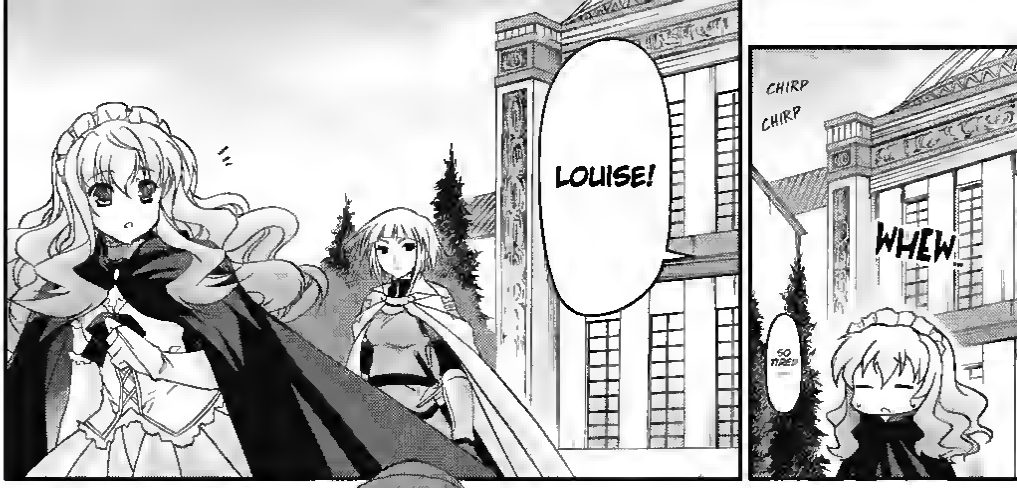
BOOM
FWIP
OUR OPPONENT'S A NOBLE MAGE, TOO!
WHAM
SWWSH
BANG

SHHNK
DON'T MOVE!
TA-TNK

SO... THIS GUY'S AN ENEMY SPY?
THAT WAS AMAZING!
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE JUST CAUGHT A SPY!
NO...HE'S JUST AN UNDERLING. THE BOSS RAT IS STILL OUT THERE.

.....
YOU TWO MET AT THE THEATER, CORRECT?
IN HIS MOST RECENT LETTER, HE ASKED YOU TO MEET WITH HIM TOMORROW AT THE USUAL PLACE.
TELL ME, IS YOUR "USUAL PLACE" THE THEATER IN THIS SKETCH?

THUD
NOTHING TO SAY?
YOUR PRIDE AS A NOBLE WON'T LET YOU SPEAK?
.....
KA-CHK
YOU HAVE UNTIL THE COUNT OF TWO.
JUMP
OR PRIDE.
LIFE...


LOUISE!
CHIRP
CHIRP
WHEW
SO TIRED

Ehhh...
YOUR MAJESTY!
SAITO!

I'M SO SORRY...
I BORROWED YOUR FAMILIAR, AND WE WERE HIDING IN THE CITY THIS WHOLE TIME.

I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU!
DASH
WHERE THE HECK DID YOU GO?!

I WAS SO SURPRISED BY AGNÈS' REPORT THIS MORNING--I HAD NO IDEA THAT YOU TWO WOULD BE WORKING TOGETHER.
YOU TRULY ARE MY DEAREST FRIEND. NO MATTER HOW FAR APART WE ARE, YOU ALWAYS FIND A WAY TO HELP ME.
YOUR MAJESTY ...
THE PREPA-RATIONS ARE COMPLETE.
THANK YOU, AGNÈS.
I OWE YOU A HUGE DEBT.
THE MUSKETEERS AND MAGIC GUARDS ARE IN POSITION.
WE HAVE THE THEATER COMPLETELY SURROUNDED.

TURN
LOUISE.
YES?
I WANT YOU TO WAIT HERE.
THIS IS SOMETHING I MUST SEE THROUGH TO THE END, ON MY OWN.
SWISH
WELL, I GUESS I'LL BE GOING.
IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR THE CURTAIN TO RISE.

IF THINGS KEEP GOING LIKE THIS, I'M GONNA BE IN BIG TROUBLE!

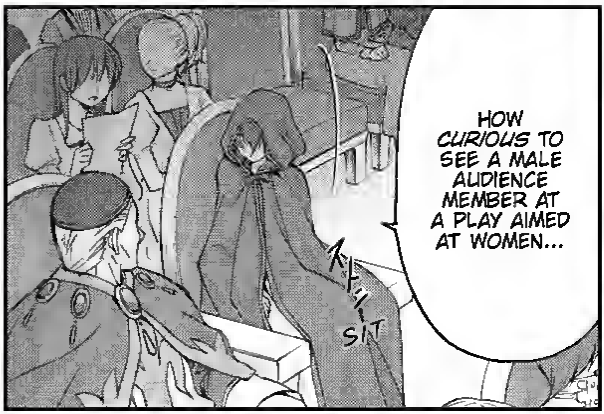
ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier

Chapter 10: A Tristainian Holiday – Part III

TAP
TAP
I THINK WE'RE THE SIDEKICKS IN THIS MISSION.
TAP
HI
RECOIL
ビクッ
?!
GLARE
くん？
HEY, WHAT THE HECK--?
くん
SNIFF
くん
SNIFF
くん
SNIFF
HUH ...?
くん
SNIFF

I KNOW THIS SMELL.
IT'S HER MAJESTY'S PERFUME!
IT, UH, MUST'VE GOTTEN ON ME WHEN I WAS ESCORTING HER BEFORE
IT'S COMING FROM YOUR NECK, TOO...
DO PEOPLE NORMALLY GET PERFUME ON THE BACK OF THEIR NECK FROM ESCORTING SOMEONE?
THEN, IT PROBABLY HAPPENED WHEN I TURNED OVER IN MY SLEEP, OR SOMETHING ...
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
GLARE
VERY SUSPICIOUS...
CLENCH
THIS HAS BECOME VERY INCONVENIENT.
.....
Yaaay!
Yaaay!
Woo
APPLAUSE

THE QUEEN'S DISAPPEARANCE... COULD IT BE AN ALBION SCHEME?
OR IS IT THE WORK OF SOME THIRD PARTY WITHIN TRISTAIN...?


HOW CURIOUS TO SEE A MALE AUDIENCE MEMBER AT A PLAY AIMED AT WOMEN...
SIT

SHAAA

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO ACCOMPANY YOU INSTEAD, LORD RICHEMONT.

EXCUSE ME...
MY COMPANION WILL BE ARRIVING SOON. WOULD YOU MIND SITTING ELSE-WHERE?

RUSTLE
AS FOR YOUR COMPANION, I WOULDN'T WASTE YOUR TIME WAITING FOR HIM.
SO... YOU HID YOURSELF AWAY...
AS PART OF A PLAN TO FLUSH ME OUT?
I FIGURED THAT IF I DISAPPEARED SUDDENLY, YOU WOULD PANIC AND CALL IN YOUR CONTACT.
THE SECRET ALBION ENVOY YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO MEET HERE WAS ARRESTED LAST NIGHT.
THE QUEEN BEING KIDNAPPED BY SOMEONE OUTSIDE YOUR CONTROL WOULD PROBABLY BE YOUR WORST CASE SCENARIO, AFTER ALL.
IN A STATE OF PANIC, EVEN THE MOST CAUTIOUS FOX WILL SHOW ITS TAIL...
I DIDN'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?! STOP ACTING SO WEAK!
I CAN'T ACT LIKE A CHILD ANY LONGER!
THAT ONE OF MY KINGDOM'S OWN SENIOR STATESMEN WOULD SELL OUT HIS QUEEN AND COUNTRY...
THIS ENTIRE THEATER IS SURROUNDED BY MY FORCES. COME PEACEFULLY AND YOU WON'T BE HURT.
IN THE NAME OF THE THRONE OF TRISTAIN, I FORMALLY REVOKE YOUR TITLE.
AHH
STAND
PATHETIC CHILD...YOU THINK YOU CAN OUT-MANEUVER ME?!
YOU THINK YOU CAN ARREST ME?

POINT
WHAT A LOVELY GIFT YOU'LL MAKE TO ALBION WHEN I DEFECT THERE.
AND AS FOR YOU, YOUR MAJESTY...
YOU'LL COME WITH ME.
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
SHOW'S OVER!
KILL ANYONE WHO MOVES!
THE STAGE IS TRISTAIN, THE ACTORS ARE ALBION...
AND YOU WILL BE THE STAR OF THE SHOW...
QUEEN HENRIETTA.

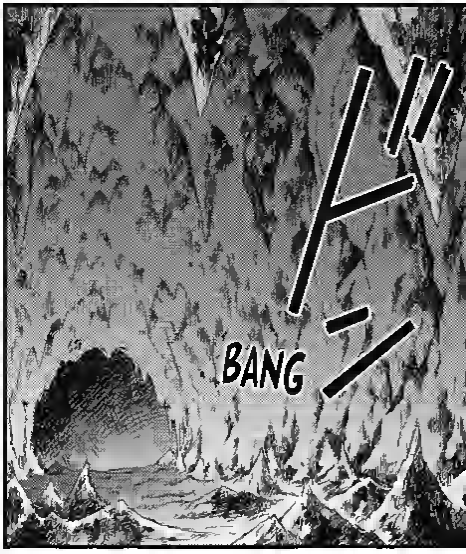
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, I WON'T BE GOING ALONG WITH YOUR SICK LITTLE GAME.
FWIP
PREPARE FOR YOUR FINAL CURTAIN CALL, LORD RICHEMONT!
SWOO
BANG
BANG
BANG
BANG

NOW, GIVE YOURSELF UP, YOU STUBBORN OLD MAN!
THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE ARE MEMBERS OF THE MUSKETEERS-- HIGHLY TRAINED FIGHTERS, BUT COMMONERS, SO YOU WOULDN'T SENSE A THREAT.
?
YOUR MAJESTY... YOU HAVE TRULY MATURED...
BUT YOU STILL NEED TO WORK ON YOUR ENDGAME!
STOMP
SHIFT
CREAK
FWOOSH
ALL OF YOU, SEARCH FOR THE TUNNEL'S EXIT!
HURRY!

DRIP
AGNÈS, PLEASE FIND HIM!
THAT WOMAN...
AFTER I DEFECT, I'LL HAVE TO COME UP WITH A PLAN OF REVENGE.
Aah!
WHAT A STRANGE ROUTE HOME YOU'RE USING.
BLAST... YOU SAW THE THEATER'S BLUEPRINTS, DIDN'T YOU...?
HOW DARE SOME OVER-ELEVATED PEASANT GET IN THE WAY OF A NOBLE LIKE ME...
FWIP

W-WAIT... I'LL PAY YOU.
MORE MONEY THAN SOMEONE LIKE YOU WOULD MAKE IN A LIFETIME.
SLAM
THE SMALL VILLAGE WHERE I WAS BORN...
カラン…
CLANK
……
ALL FOR A LITTLE BRIBE FROM THE CHURCH.
CLINK
WAS FALSELY ACCUSED OF MANY CRIMES, AND DESTROYED, BECAUSE OF OUR BELIEFS.

IS THAT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A NOBLE?
SELLING OUT THE COMMON PEOPLE, THEIR COUNTRY, AND THEIR QUEEN, FOR MONEY...
I WON'T BE ACCEPTING YOUR OFFER.
ENJOY YOUR RICHES IN THE AFTER-LIFE.
THNK


BANG

YES...I'M RELIEVED, TOO.
THANK YOU SO MUCH, LOUISE...
BEAM
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE SAFE, YOUR MAJESTY!
BLUSH!!
INTIMATE?!
W-W-WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
IT WASN'T ANYTHING, REALLY. WE PRETENDED TO BE LOVERS TO AVOID ATTRACTING THE ENEMY'S ATTENTION...WE EVEN PRESSED OUR LIPS TOGETHER TO COMPLETE THE RUSE.
JUMP
PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY, I'M NO HERO...
MORE IMPORTANTLY, LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO THE HERO WHO SINGLE-HANDEDLY FOUND AND DEALT WITH THE TRAITOR AFTER HE RAN...
NO NEED FOR FORMAL INTRODUCTIONS.
BESIDES, MISS VALLIÈRE AND I ARE ALREADY *INTIMATELY ACQUAINTED*, SO...

OH JEEZ, JUST MAKE FUN OF ME ALREADY! HAVING TO KISS A GIRL AS PART OF A MISSION...
PRESSED OUR LIPS... TOGETHER...
DIZZY
DIZZY
DIZZY
.....
CRACK

WAVE
W-WELL THEN, WE'D BETTER BE GOING...
SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE
HA HAAH...
TWITCH
Grrr...
SO, DOG...
I THINK I FIGURED OUT WHY I SMELLED HER PERFUME ON THE BACK OF YOUR NECK.
YOU KISSED HER MAJESTY, DIDN'T YOU?!
.....!
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
THIS TIME, I WON'T STOP WITH A LITTLE PAIN...
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF, FIDO?
W-
WOOF!

WHAT WAS THAT? WHY DID THEY RUSH OUT OF HERE SO SUDDENLY?
OH, IT'S NOTHING ...
.....
?
NOTHING AT ALL...

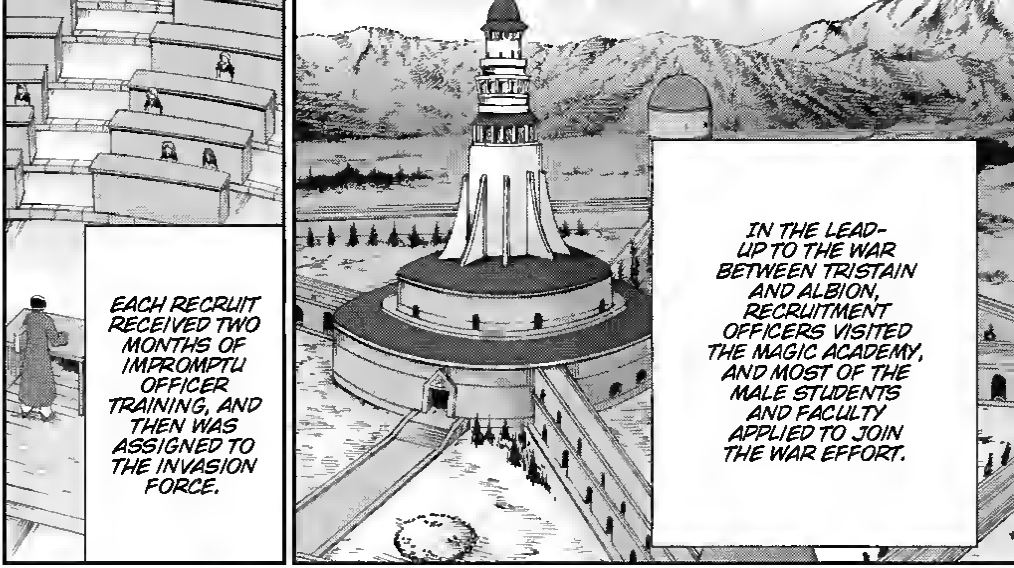
W-
WOOF!

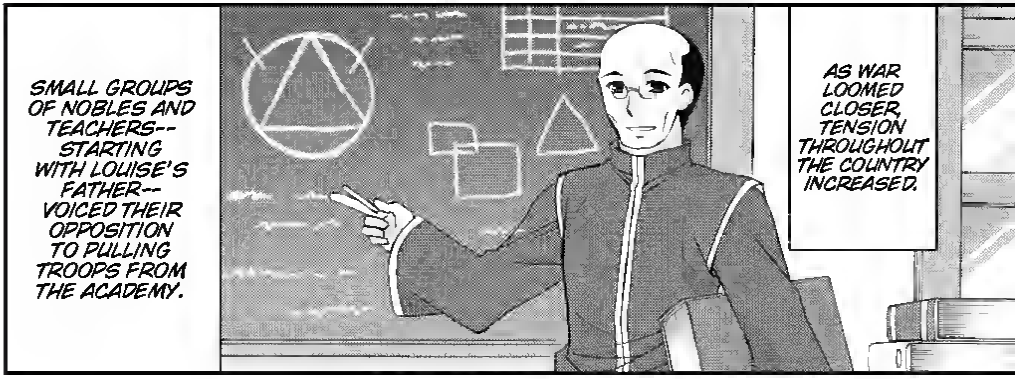
ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier

オオオ…
WOOOOO
IT'S TIME... OUR WAR WITH ALBION WILL BEGIN IN EARNEST.
TO ESTABLISH OUR SUPERIORITY FROM THE VERY FIRST BATTLE, LOUISE'S POWER--THE POWER OF VOID-- IS VITAL.
LOUISE BELIEVES IN ME. SO SHE HEADED FOR THE FRONT LINES WITH NO HESITATION.
カロン
KA-CLUNK
Hooray
Hooray
I WONDER HOW MANY LIVES WILL END TO HELP ME GET MY REVENGE?
THIS WAR IS NOT FOR MY COUNTRY OR MY PEOPLE.
ITS SOLE PURPOSE IS TO AVENGE THE MAN I LOVE.

SOMEWHERE IN THIS CROWD IS A GIRL I GREW UP WITH... SOMEONE I CALL MY CLOSEST FRIEND.
HAIL TRISTAIN!
HAIL TRISTAIN!
CLENCH
MY SIN WILL NEVER BE ERASED, NO MATTER WHAT I DO...
AND OTHERS WHO LOVE HER, AS WELL.
WHETHER WE WIN THIS WAR, OR LOSE.
TO BATTLE!
ALL HAIL TRISTAIN!

Chapter 11: The Ruby of Atonement – Part 1


EACH RECRUIT RECEIVED TWO MONTHS OF IMPROMPTU OFFICER TRAINING, AND THEN WAS ASSIGNED TO THE INVASION FORCE.
IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE WAR BETWEEN TRISTAIN AND ALBION, RECRUITMENT OFFICERS VISITED THE MAGIC ACADEMY, AND MOST OF THE MALE STUDENTS AND FACULTY APPLIED TO JOIN THE WAR EFFORT.

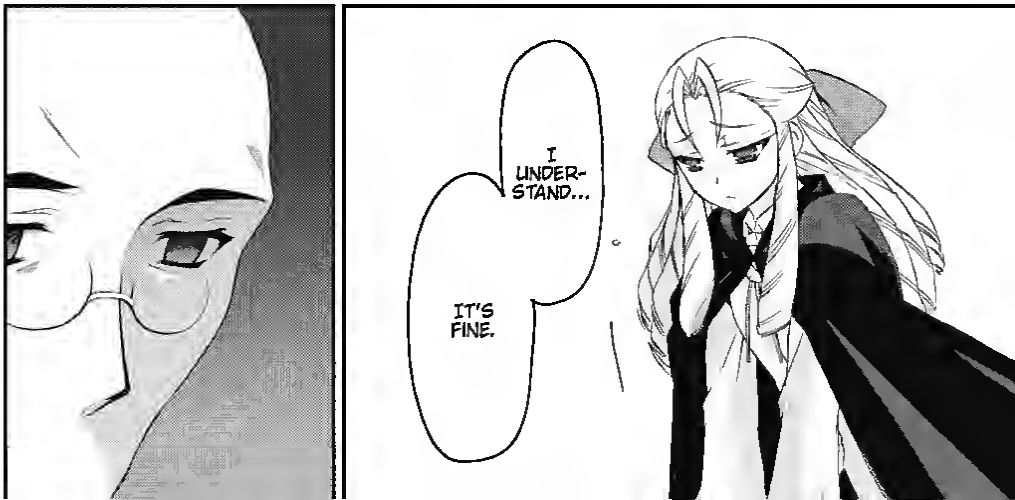

SMALL GROUPS OF NOBLES AND TEACHERS-- STARTING WITH LOUISE'S FATHER-- VOICED THEIR OPPOSITION TO PULLING TROOPS FROM THE ACADEMY.
AS WAR LOOMED CLOSER, TENSION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY INCREASED.

……

SPARKLE
SPARKLE
SPARKLE
キラ
キラ
キラ
I MEAN, EVEN VAIN, WIMPY GUICHE SIGNED UP. MEANWHILE, I'M STUCK HERE, SITTING IN SOME BORING LECTURE...?
CLUNK
カタ
ン
YES, MISS MONTMORENCY. DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?
RAISE
JEEZ...
IT'S REALLY SINKING IN NOW THAT WE'RE AT WAR.
IF I WERE A MAN, I WOULD'VE ENLISTED, TOO.
WE'RE IN THE MIDST OF A WAR, WITH THE FATE OF OUR NATION AT STAKE.
SHOULD WE REALLY BE WASTING OUR TIME IN CLASS?
WASTING, YOU SAY?
YOU ARE STUDENTS, AND I AM YOUR TEACHER. THIS IS A SCHOOL.
IT IS BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE MIDST OF A WAR THAT YOUR STUDIES ARE SO IMPORTANT! ONLY THROUGH LEARNING ABOUT THE PAST CAN WE SEE JUST HOW FOOLISH THIS WAR IS!

YOU'RE SCARED, AREN'T YOU?!
AS A FELLOW FIRE MAGE, I'M EMBARRASSED FOR YOU...
STAND
THAT'S RIGHT...
TAP

IRK IRK
.....
BUT THAT IS NOT SOMETHING I'M ASHAMED OF.
I AM A COWARD, AFRAID OF WAR.


I UNDER-STAND...
IT'S FINE.

THEY SAY THAT FIRE IS ONLY FOR WAR OR DESTRUCTION...
BUT THAT CAN'T BE THE ONLY PLACE WHERE FIRE CAN SHINE.
20 YEARS AGO
FWOOOM
THIS EPIDEMIC MUST BE EXTINGUISHED!
BURN THE ENTIRE VILLAGE TO THE GROUND!
FWOOSH
JUST AS EXPECTED, COMMANDER... HOW MERCILESS.
THERE WILL BE NOTHING LEFT BY THE TIME WE'RE DONE.
.....

.....
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
MR. COLBERT!
ARE YOU LEAVING NOW, MR. SAITO?
I WAS JUST HEADING OVER TO THE LABORATORY.
TMP
TMP
TMP
YEAH...
THOUGH I'M STILL WAITING FOR LOUISE TO GET HERE.
Girls need to make LOTS of special preparations for a journey!

OOH!
CRUNCH
CRUNCH
I'VE FINISHED EQUIPPING ALL YOUR GEAR, TOO...
I CUT IT CLOSE, BUT I FINISHED IN TIME.
TWEET
TWEET..
THIS "AIRPLANE" YOU BROUGHT HERE IS JUST BREATHTAKING EVERY TIME I SEE IT.
IT'S BEEN THE CENTER OF MY RESEARCH LATELY... I'M TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO CONVERT MY POWER OF FLAMES INTO ENERGY TO RUN THE PLANE...
BUT IT SEEMS CREATING AN INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE SIMILAR THE ONE USED TO POWER THE ZERO FIGHTER JUST ISN'T POSSIBLE HERE IN HALKEGINIA...

I MANAGED TO RECREATE YOUR "GASOLINE" THROUGH MAGIC, BUT I COULDN'T USE MAGIC TO REPLICATE THE GEARS OR PARTS OF THE AIRPLANE...NOT EVEN TO REPLICATE REPLACEMENT BULLETS FOR THE MACHINE GUN.
I DID MANAGE TO CREATE ONE THING, HOWEVER--- THIS, HERE. I THINK YOU'LL FIND IT VERY USEFUL.
THOUGH I CONFESS IT'S MORE AN APPLICATION OF EXISTING TECHNOLOGIES THAN ANYTHING PURELY NEW...
I'M SORRY THAT I HAVEN'T HAD TIME TO EXPLAIN YOUR NEW WEAPONS PROPERLY--I'VE BEEN QUITE BUSY WITH A NUMBER OF PROJECTS...
BUT YOU'LL BE *FINE* AS LONG AS YOU READ THIS INSTRUCTION MANUAL.
FLIP
UH... I'LL GET LOUISE TO READ IT TO ME LATER.
I KNOW YOU AREN'T ONE OF THE NOBILITY...
AND, TO BE HONEST, I DIDN'T WANT TO PUT WEAPONS ON ANYTHING ONE OF MY STUDENTS WOULD RIDE.
MR. SAITO...
IF, ONE DAY, YOUR WORLD---
I'M READY!

TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH!
TURN 20
FUME FUME
UM... SO, MR. COLBERT?
MAN, SHE'S BEEN ACTING LIKE THIS EVER SINCE WE GOT HOME.
YOU WERE SAYING SOMETHING BEFORE?
I--
IT...WAS NOTHING.
GO ON, NOW.
VRRRRRRRR
RIGHT, I GUESS WE'LL GET GOING.

MISS VALLIÈRE!
MR. SAITO!
VRRRRRRR
DON'T YOU DARE GET YOURSELVES KILLED!
DON'T DIE!
VRRRRRRR
EVEN IF IT'S SHAMEFUL...
VRRRRRRR
YOU CAN'T DIE! YOU MUSTN'T...
REMEMBER THE PEOPLE WHO'LL MOURN YOU!
VRRRRRRR
VRRRRR
EVEN IF THEY CALL YOU COWARDS!

YOU HAVE TO COME BACK!
VMMMMVROOOOOO
VROO...
SULK
POUT...
SHE'S BEEN PISSED OFF EVER SINCE WE GOT BACK FROM OUR TRIP...
HEY, LOUISE... WE'RE JUST ABOUT TO MEET UP WITH THE FLEET, SO...
VROOO
IS IT BECAUSE I SAID "I LOVE YOU," THEN WENT TOO FAR WITH HER?
GLANCE

HE'S MY FAMILIAR!
HOW DARE HE LAY A FINGER ON ANOTHER WOMAN!
HE TOLD ME HE LOVED ME!

MORE LIKE THREE MONTHS AFTER WE GET MARRIED... I CAN'T BELIEVE I CONSIDERED ALLOWING IT FOR EVEN A SECOND!!!
EVEN THOUGH I'LL NEVER DO THAT UNTIL WE GET MARRIED...
FUME
FUME
HE KISSED ME AND TOUCHED ME ALL OVER ON THAT BOAT!
HE TRIED TO... WELL... YOU KNOW...!

BLUSH
A... ALLOWING IT?!
KA-CLINK
Yo, partner.
FLAIL だば
FLAIL だば
?
FLAIL だば
WHAT AM I THINKING?!
VROOO
That boat you're supposed ta be landin' on--I think I see it comin'.
Fly the plane a little closer ta this boat here.
OKAY.
YEAH!
OW!
SMACK
BOAT...?!!
AAH! だばぁ

HUH? IT'S THE ONLY PLACE TO LAND! WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
WAAAAAH!
ぽか
THWACK
WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE A BOAT, OF ALL THINGS?!
LEARN TO PICK A BETTER PLACE!
ぽか
SMACK
SLAP
ぽか
Uh...I don't think she's talkin' about **this** boat, partner.

RRRRR
THANK YOU FOR COMING, MISS ZERO.

CREAK
THIS VESSEL WAS SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED TO TRANSPORT OUR DRAGON KNIGHTS.
IT IS OUR FLEET'S FLAGSHIP.

ARE YOU *SURE* YOU WANT TO TELL THEM EVERYTHING ...?
CREAK

CREAK
I KNOW WE CAME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE...BUT SOMETHING ABOUT THIS DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT.
.....

WELL THEN... MADAM TRUMP CARD, VOID USER FROM HER MAJESTY..
LET'S BEGIN OUR **WAR COUNCIL**, SHALL WE?

IF WE DON'T, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO COORDINATE WITH THE ARMY PROPERLY...

WE'LL BEGIN OUR ASSAULT BY LANDING OUR ENTIRE FORCE OF 60,000 TROOPS ON **ROSYTH,** WHICH IS A VITAL STRATEGIC POINT IN ALBION.
IT IS *VITAL* THAT WE LAND IN ROSYTH WITH FEW-TO-NO CASUALTIES, SO WE MUST TAKE THEM BY COMPLETE SURPRISE.
IN OTHER WORDS, WE NEED TO CONVINCE THEM THAT WE'LL BE LANDING AT A DIFFERENT STRATEGIC POINT, **DARDANELLES.**
IN TERMS OF SHEER NUMBERS, OUR FORCE IS TWICE AS LARGE AS THEIRS. HOWEVER, ALBION'S SUPERIOR MILITARY TRAINING MAY BE ENOUGH TO ERASE OUR ADVANTAGE.
WE WILL COMMAND THE FLEET... AND WE'D LIKE TO ENTRUST THE DISTRACTION TO **YOU,** MADAM VOID.

DON'T WORRY, IT'S A SIMPLE RUSE. YOU'LL JUST NEED TO CREATE ENOUGH CHAOS THAT THEY THINK WE'RE LANDING IN DARDA-NELLES.
THAT SHOULD BE A SIMPLE TASK FOR THE LEGENDARY ZERO, NO?
THESE BAS-TARDS..
TREATING LOUISE LIKE A TOOL OR A *WEAPON*...
A DIVER-SION...
DO I EVEN HAVE A SPELL FOR SOMETHING LIKE THAT...?

HEY...
IS THIS... THING... YOURS?
TMP
WHAT THE--?
OH, GREAT. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE UNWEL-COME HERE, TOO.
NO, IT'S A TYPE OF MACHINE.
IT'S CALLED AN AIR-PLANE.
IS IT ALIVE?
Phew!
I KNEW IT~!
SEE? I TOLD YOU GUYS!
WE WIN! YOU OWE US EACH AN EQUI!
WOO!

HEY...
IS THIS... THING... YOURS?
TMP
WHAT THE--?
OH, GREAT. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE UNWEL-COME HERE, TOO.
NO, IT'S A TYPE OF MACHINE.
IT'S CALLED AN AIR-PLANE.
IS IT ALIVE?
Phew!
I KNEW IT~!
SEE? I TOLD YOU GUYS!
WE WIN! YOU OWE US EACH AN EQUI!
WOO!

?
?
?
?
SORRY TO SCARE YOU. WE JUST HAD A LITTLE BET RUNNING, SEE?
EVERYBODY ELSE THOUGHT THAT THING WAS SOME KIND OF ANIMAL, LIKE A WEIRD DRAGON.
WE'RE DRAGON KNIGHTS
WELL, TECHNICALLY WE NEVER DID OUR LAST YEAR OF TRAINING...
BUT SINCE IT'S SUCH A CRITICAL TIME, I GUESS WE'RE CLOSE ENOUGH
Aah?!
RRRRR
WANNA SADDLE UP?
RRR?
REALLY?!

Woo!
All right!
POUT
I NEED TO THINK.
THE DIVERSION THEY ASSIGNED ME... I WONDER WHAT MAGIC I SHOULD USE FOR IT...
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO START...!
DIZZY
DIZZY
DIZZY
IF WE SNEAK OUT OF OUR ROOMS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WON'T THE PATROLS CATCH US RIGHT AWAY?
OOH! I'M IN!
WELP, NOW THAT WE'VE GOT A COUPLE NEW BUDDIES, LET'S DRINK THE NIGHT AWAY!
SHOULDN'T HE BE THINKING OF HIS MISTRESS AT A TIME LIKE THIS?!
DRAGONS AND DRUNKEN PARTIES?! WE GO TO WAR TOMOR-ROW!!
Ha ha ha ha!
SERI-OUSLY?!
TWITCH

WE CAN MAKE SOME DUMMIES TO PUT IN OUR BEDS WHEN WE SNEAK OUT!
YOU'D THINK A FAMILIAR WOULD WANT TO HOLD AND COMFORT HIS ANXIOUS MISTRESS RIGHT ABOUT NOW...JUST LIKE ON THAT BOAT...
DOESN'T HE GET THAT WE BOTH MIGHT DIE?!
GRRRRRRRRRR...
CLENCH
IGNORING ME LIKE THIS IS UNFOR-GIV--
I KNOW!
HUH?
CLAP
ぱん
ちん
I JUST NEED TO MAKE 60,000 DUMMIES!
THAT'S IT...!

I DON'T NEED STRAW--I'LL CREATE THEM WITH MAGIC!
UH..."60,000 DUMMIES"? BUT WE ONLY NEED A FEW FOR THE PEOPLE HERE... AND WE DON'T HAVE MUCH STRAW FOR STUFFING...
FWOO
SLAM
DASH
WHAT THE HECK WAS THAT ABOUT...?
WOOOSH

WE CAN MAKE SOME DUMMIES TO PUT IN OUR BEDS WHEN WE SNEAK OUT!

ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier

I NEED TO CREATE A DIVERSION.
I MUST MAKE THE ENEMY BELIEVE THAT THE 60,000 TROOPS COMMANDED BY HER MAJESTY ARE LANDING IN DARDANELLES INSTEAD OF ROSYTH.
GLOW
SO, THE SPELL I NEED IS...
FLIP
FLIP
SMILE

Chapter 12: The Ruby of Atonement – Part II

AGNÈS AND HER MUSKETEERS HAVE ARRIVED.
SHAKE SHAKE
THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK. THOUGH WAR IS ALWAYS UGLY, THIS ONE IS ESPECIALLY TERRIBLE...
HOW CAN THERE BE ANY TRUE JUSTICE WHEN WE PUT WOMEN AND CHILDREN ON THE BATTLEFIELD?
THE MONARCHY IS CALLING THIS AN ALL-OUT WAR.
THIS ISN'T NOBLE GENTLEMEN OR TRAINED SOLDIERS LINED UP IN A FIELD. EVERYONE IS AT RISK.
AND DEATH DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE. MAN, WOMAN, OR CHILD... DEATH SIMPLY IS.
SWISH

Y-YOU LOT...WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?!
WHISPER
WHISPER
TMP
J-JUST A MO-MENT!
YOU'RE CANCELING OUR CLASSES?! THERE'S NO WAY--!
ALL CLASSES ARE CANCELED, IMMEDIATELY! THEY WILL BE REPLACED BY MILITARY TRAINING--ALL OF YOU ARE TO PRESENT YOURSELVES IN FULL UNIFORM IN THE COURTYARD, AT ONCE!
WE ARE HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN'S MUSKETEERS. IN THE NAME OF THE QUEEN, WE ORDER YOU...

STOP
IF YOU WISH TO PLAY AT WAR, DO IT AFTER WE'RE DONE WITH OUR STUDI--
I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR ORDERS! MY JOB IS TO TEACH MY STUDENTS!
I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT BABYSITTING, EITHER...BUT THIS IS AN ORDER.

YOU'RE A FIRE USER, AREN'T YOU?
I CAN SMELL THE STENCH OF BURNING ON YOUR CLOTHES.
AND THE WORST OF THEM ALL ARE THE ONES WHO USE FIRE.
LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING... I HATE MAGES.
WHISPER
WHISPER
CLANK
"PLAYING AT WAR," YOU CALLED IT? HOW DARE YOU.
YOU THINK YOU CAN SPEAK TO ME LIKE THAT BECAUSE I'M NOT A MAGE?
RUSH
RUSH
.....
SHHHK
DO NOT GET BETWEEN ME AND MY DUTY, OR ELSE. UNDERSTOOD?

WE'RE ALMOST AT DARDA-NELLES.
ONCE WE GET THERE, THE REAL WORK BEGINS.
VURR...

I WAS SO NERVOUS AND EXCITED ABOUT TODAY THAT I BARELY GOT A MOMENT OF SLEEP LAST NIGHT...
ZZZZ...
LAST NIGHT, I FIGURED OUT THE SPELL I'M GOING TO USE FOR THE PLAN TODAY...
PULL
Noble or commoner, everyone who flies the skies is my brother!
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS UP ALL NIGHT PARTYING WITH THOSE DRAGON KNIGHTS.

Yaawn~ ...
UGH... EARLY MORNING PATROL IS THE WORST! IT'S WAY TOO COLD TO BE OUT OF BED...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
NOW, ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT UNTIL THE TIME IS RIGHT.
AH....
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
I WONDER WHEN THE WAR'S GONNA START ALREADY--

ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ
ゴゴゴ VRRRRRRRRR
ENEMY VESSEL SIGHTED!
THEY FOUND US MUCH SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED.
SLIDE
THE CHIEFS OF STAFF DREW UP A PLAN FOR HER.
SHE FIGURED OUT THE SPELL SHE'LL BE USING LAST NIGHT.
WHAT ABOUT THE VOID?

SNAP
MESSENGER!
HAVE VOID PREPARE FOR SORTIE! TARGET IS DARDANELLES-- I LEAVE THE PARTICULARS OF THE MISSION TO HER! HAVE THE SECOND COMPANY OF DRAGON KNIGHTS ACT AS HER ESCORT!
REPEAT THE ORDER!
READY THE "VOID" FOR BATTLE! TARGET-- DARDANELLES!
PARTICULARS OF THE PLAN AT HER DISCRETION! ALL UNITS OF THE SECOND COMPANY OF DRAGON KNIGHTS WILL SERVE AS ESCORT! SIR!!
FLIP
INTERESTING.
DART
NOW WE'RE FREE TO SET OUR COURSE FOR ROSYTH.
YES.
ADVISE THE CAPTAINS OF OUR SHIPS ON THE FRONT LINE...

EVEN IF THEY HAVE TO LITERALLY RAM INTO THE ONCOMING SHIPS, THEY MUST NOT ALLOW ANY ENEMY VESSELS NEAR THE TRANSPORT FLEET WITH OUR LANDING FORCES.
Uuugh!
Gaah...
JEEZ, HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU GUYS--I CAN'T READ HALKEGINIAN!
LOOK-- THIS ONE RIGHT HERE IS DARDA-NELLES!
FROM THERE, I'M SURE MADAM VOID WILL KNOW WHAT TO DO!
CALLING LOUISE "MADAM VOID"... IT SOUNDS REALLY WEIRD AND CREEPY!
YOU NEED TO GET MADAM VOID TO THIS POINT!
ぽしゃ
POINT

THE DRAGON KNIGHTS WILL LEAD THE WAY-- BE SURE TO STAY WITH THEM.
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
GOOOOOHHHHHH
THAT'S THE FIRE SHIPS!

HUH? WHAT'S GOING ON?!
HURRY UP AND GO!
THEY'RE UNMANNED SHIPS FILLED WITH GUNPOWDER, SET TO CRASH INTO THE ENEMY FLEET AND EXPLODE!
CLATTER
IT'S EASIER SAID THAN DONE...
HEY, LOUISE!
I NEED MAGIC TO SPIN THE PROPELLERS ON THIS THING!
CRAP, I CAN'T INTERRUPT HER RIGHT NOW...!
.....
GRIP
DAM-MIT...!

JERK
KA-BOOM
!!
SLIDE
RATTLE
RATTLE
WOOOOOSH
GYAAAAAAAH!
HUH?!
FWOOSH

WE'RE REALLY GONNA CRASH!
WE'RE GONNA CRASH!
WE'RE GONNA CRASH!!
POKE
Hey, partner... wanna hear some good news?
A RATTLE
A RATTLE
WOOOOOOSH
GRIP
THEY ARE...!
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GONNA DIE LIKE THIS!
OH MY GOD, NOT THE TIME!
RATTLE
RATTLE
RATTLE
VRRRR
Check it out--the propellers are spinnin' from the air pressure, see?
HUH?
THEN MAYBE I CAN--!!
GRIIIND

WOOSH
KA-CLUNK
VRRRRRR
VUURRRR
YES!!

BUT THAT EXPLOSION... I WONDER HOW MANY PEOPLE GOT CAUGHT UP IN IT...?
RATTLE
RATTLE
Phew!
Oh yeah, keep those compliments comin'!
DERFLINGER, YOU'RE SERIOUSLY AWESOME, MAN!
WHEW! TALK ABOUT A LUCKY BREAK!
GLINT
!
FLUTTER
FLUTTER

THEY'RE ALIVE...!
JERK!!
ALL RIGHT-- WE'RE BACK ON TRACK!
SHINE...

ZERO'S
FAMILIAR
Chevalier

ゴオオ
FOOOOM...
AS WE EXPECTED OF YOU, COMMANDER.
PLAGUE OUTBREAK OR NOT, TO TURN AN ENTIRE VILLAGE INTO A **SEA OF FLAME** TO CONTAIN IT, WITH NO MERCY FOR WOMEN OR CHILDREN...
AH, ISN'T WAR **GRAND?** THE SMELL OF LIVING THINGS BEING BURNT TO A CRISP...
TO ME, THAT ODOR IS *FINER* THAN ANY PERFUME.
FOOO

I HAVE A REQUEST. I'D LIKE YOU TO OCCUPY A PARTICULAR ESTABLISHMENT IN TRISTAIN.
THE LEGENDARY MERCENARY MAGE "MENVIL OFTHE WHITE FLAMES"
BUT IT'S ACTUALLY QUITE IMPORTANT FROM A POLITICAL STANDPOINT...
AND IT'S FAIRLY FAR FROM THE CAPITOL CITY OF TRISTANIA.
ITS DEFENSES ARE WEAK...
IF WE CAN TAKE A NUMBER OF THEIR YOUNG NOBLES HOSTAGE, THAT WILL BE QUITE THE BARGAINING CHIP.
TRISTAIN'S MAGIC ACADEMY.

.....
JUST TO BE CLEAR...
ONCE I TAKE THESE STUDENTS AS HOSTAGES...
I'M FREE TO *BURN* THE REST?
WHISPER
WHISPER

Chapter 13: The Ruby of Atonement – Part III

VUUURRR
I SEE IT!
THE CONTINENT OF ALBION!
VUUURRRRR
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
Yo! Partner!!
JUST A LITTLE FARTHER NOW... WE'RE ALMOST THERE.
GLANCE
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
!!

FSSSSS
AAH!
YAAA!
BAM
BAM
BAM
LOUISE! I NEED YOU TO READ ME THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR MR. COLBERT'S NEW WEAPON!
1st TURN
RATATATATA
I'VE GOT WORKING MACHINE GUNS... BUT 7.7MM ROUNDS ARE TOO WEAK!
URGH! HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE TO FOCUS?! WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BATTLE, HERE!!

WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER--I JUST NEED YOU TO READ ME THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL! IT'S UNDER YOUR SEAT.
AT THIS RATE, WE'RE GONNA GET BLOWN OUT OF THE SKY BEFORE YOU CAN EVEN HIT THEM WITH YOUR VOID MAGIC!
BARK
WH-WHAT?! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
HUH?
HURRY UP!
UHM... LET'S SEE...
"IT'S A SECRET OF THE FLAME SERPENT." ♪
.....
UM... "FIRST OF ALL, I NEED YOU TO CALM DOWN AS BEST YOU CAN. AFTER THAT, YOU'LL NEED TO PULL ON THE LEVER RIGHT NEXT TO THE STICK THAT CONTROLS THE ENGINE APERTURE."
"BUT PLEASE KEEP READING THIS."
UH... "MY DEAR, MR. SAITO, IF YOU'RE READING THIS, THEN SURELY YOU'VE FOUND YOURSELF IN QUITE A BIND. AND THAT'S NO GOOD AT ALL!"
WHAT THE HECK WAS THE OLD MAN THINKING?!

BOING
CREEEK
YANK
IS THIS IT?!
SILENCE...
You can do it, Miss Vallière!
You can do it Saito!
You can do it, Saito!
UH...
IT SAYS.. "A HAPPY LITTLE MR SNAKE WILL CHEER YOU BOTH ON. EVEN WHEN THINGS ARE LOOKING DOWN, DO YOUR BEST!"
ARGH! I'M GONNA PUNCH THAT OLD MAN RIGHT IN THE FACE!
I DON'T CARE IF I DIE OUT HERE-- I'LL HAUNT HIM!!

LET ME SEE...
CRUD... LOUISE! DID IT SAY ANYTHING ELSE?!
ばさ
FLAP
ばさ
FLAP
"OH, I ALMOST FORGOT! A WORD OF WARNING-- IF YOU HAVE ANY ALLIES WITH YOU, YOU'LL WANT TO GATHER THEM UP AS CLOSE AS YOU CAN!
YANK
"NOW, TUG ON THE TONGUE OF HAPPY MR. SNAKE...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
"TO AVOID FRIENDLY FIRE, I'VE CONFIGURED IT NOT TO REACT TO ANY MAGIC WITHIN A RADIUS OF TWENTY METERS FROM LAUNCH POSITION."
"THIS DEVICE REACTS TO MAGIC, SO ANY ALLIED MAGES NEED TO GET AS CLOSE TO YOU AS POSSIBLE, IMMEDIATELY!

FWOOOOM
WOOOSH
YANK
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
"MY TALENT IS TERRIFYING! THESE ARE IRON FIRE ARROWS, DRIVEN FORWARD WITH BURNING GUNPOWDER. YOU CAN CALL THEM 'FLYING MR. SNAKES,' IF YOU'D LIKE."
WOW...

KA-BOOM
VRRRRRRR
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
WHAM
GRIP
WHAM
SPIN
CRAP, WE'RE GONNA GET HIT!

KA-BOOM
YUURRRR...
So they've been ordered ta make that happen... whatever price they have ta pay.
CLANK
CLANK
CLANK
SHIELD ...?
You know why... they're actin' as your shield.
That's right... Their mission only succeeds if you two make it to Dardanelles safely.
WHAT THE HELL ...?!
BUT... WHY?!
YRRRRR

Are you not gettin' what this plan involves, partner?
.....
SLAM
WHAT?! HOW COULD THEY JUST DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!
SWOOP
KA-BOOOOM

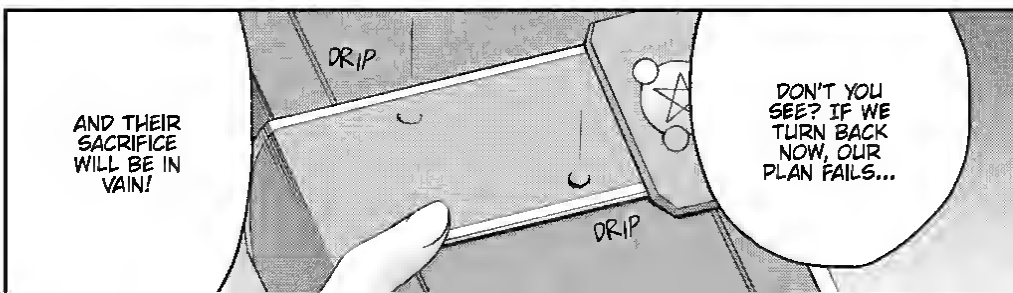
CLINK
CLINK
Heya, little lady!
H-HEY!
ARE YOU FREAKING KIDDING ME?!
CLINK
Pull the lever under your seat!
That's prob'ly that last new weapon the old man put on this plane.
KA-CHANK!!
TURN

FOOOM
THUNK
VVROOO
RRRRRR...

CLINK
Partner, don't you dare pull that control rod!
If you pull it upright at this speed, the entire plane'll fall apart!
CLINK
CLINK
HEY! GET BACK! DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT USING THOSE GUYS' LIVES TO BLOCK US FROM THE ENEMY!!
RRRRRRR...

THOSE GUYS ARE GONNA DIE FOR US, EVEN THOUGH THEY JUST MET US YESTERDAY!
THIS IS SO MESSED UP... CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW THEIR NAMES!
I KNOW... I KNOW THAT!
GRIP
RRR
RRRRR...

BUT WE HAVE A MISSION-- TO HIT THE ENEMY WITH THE VOID SPELL!
AND *THEIR MISSION* IS TO ESCORT US SAFELY, SO WE HAVE A CHANCE TO DO IT!


DON'T YOU SEE? IF WE TURN BACK NOW, OUR PLAN FAILS...
AND THEIR SACRIFICE WILL BE IN VAIN!
DRIP
DRIP

HOW... HOW CAN I JUST ACCEPT THAT?!
We're almost at Dardanelles Port.
Part-ner...
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
FWUP
VVRRR
SAITO...
I NEED TO GO UP A LITTLE HIGHER..

SSHH
NO MATTER WHAT, THE PLAN MUST SUCCEED...
TO
APPEAR
TO
TO...
WOBBLE
I'LL MAKE IT WORK, FOR ALL OF THEM.

DARDA-NELLES?!
VVVVRRRRRR
POINT
TURN THE FLEET AROUND! EVERY SHIP!!
I THOUGHT THE ENEMY WAS HEADED FOR ROSYTH!
SLAM
WE'LL BE IN TROUBLE IF THEY INVADE WHILE WE'RE SO DEFENSELESS.
OUR 30,000-STRONG ALBION FORCE IS ALREADY HEADED FOR ROSYTH...

SHRROOO
To be continued!

HOW... HOW CAN I JUST *ACCEPT* THAT?!

This is the afterword!

Here it is--the second volume of *Zero's Familiar Chevalier*! (Wild applause! ✩)
Now, if you picked up this manga, chances are you already know that we're getting the anime treatment for the **fourth** time now! This is so amazing...I can't wait to see *Zero no Tsukaima F*! That news, combined with the original light novels reaching their final conclusion--things just get more and more exciting every day! Yamaguchi-sensei, Usatsuki-sensei, please do your best! I'll do my very best on the manga, too, so please continue to support me!

I didn't really announce this in any of my books before, but I'm on twitter, and I also have a blog. I put a lot of notifications about my manga on there, so please stop by and play sometime!

Until then~! ✩

Assistants
Kishiduka
Eiji YUU

&digital assistants

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Official site http://pen-serio.jp/highwaystar
Blog http://mekapun.blog116.fc2.com
Twitter http://twitter.com/higayukari

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Assistants
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Official site http://pen.sensio.jp/highwaystar
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Original Character Designs by **EIJI USATSUKA**

TRANSLATION
Nan Rymer

ADAPTATION
Rebecca Scoble

LETTERING AND LAYOUT
Alice Baker

COVER DESIGN
Nicky Lim

PROOFREADER
Katherine Bell
Conner Crooks

MANAGING EDITOR
Adam Arnold

PUBLISHER
Jason DeAngelis

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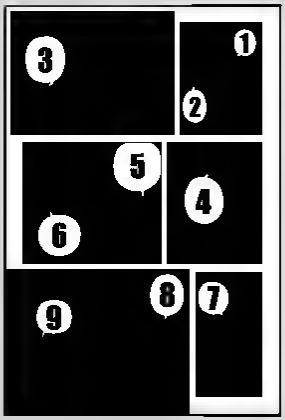
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



QUEEN OF HEARTS

Louise and Saito are still undercover at the Charming Fairy Inn when they get some bad news—Queen Henrietta is missing!

With their relationship on the rocks, Louise and Saito each decide to help Henrietta in their own way. Louise teams up with a serious, noble-hating Chevalier named Agnès and pieces together clues about the conspiracy to take Henrietta's throne. Meanwhile, Saito finds a more intimate way to help the queen...

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